

Aging

11

For the purpose of this publication, seniors are defined as people over the age of 65, the age used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. However, being over 65 does not indicate that a person has special needs.

In fact, many seniors do not have needs that differ significantly from the general population. Two of the primary factors that contribute to the number of seniors with special needs are poverty and poor health, which is often a direct result of poverty. The purpose of this chapter is to address the needs not of the general population of seniors but of those seniors who do have exceptional needs, their families, caregivers, and the professionals who work with them.

It is important that libraries pay very close attention to the needs and desires of seniors because their numbers are rising. They are going to expect and demand appropriate services. A report issued by the Demographic Services Center of the Wisconsin Department of Administration (Kale and Enga-Robertson 2000) predicts that the population of people over the age of 65 will increase slowly between 2000 and 2010 and then will increase 88.9 percent by 2030. This will be an increase from 703,000 to 1,327,000. In 2000 the elderly population, 65 and over, was slightly more than half the size of the young population (ages 0–17). In 2030 the elderly population will almost equal the population of the young, birth through age 17.

Not only will there be more seniors in the next 30 years, but they will be living longer. Advances in medical care have increased the life expectancy rates. In 2000 the rate for males was 75.3 years and 80.7 for females. In 2030 the rate is projected to be 78.5 for males and 83.5 for females. There will be four times as many centenarians by 2030, increasing from 1,000 in 2000 to 3,800 in 2030.

Health Issues

AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) issued a report in May 2002 called *Beyond 50.02: A Report to the Nation on Trends in Health Security*. AARP found that people age 50 and older are living longer and generally report being healthier than their predecessors. Over the past two decades, seniors are enjoying greater financial security and healthier lifestyles.

The report also indicated that although the rate of disabilities among older adults has been declining, limitations on daily functioning rises steeply as seniors age. Chronic health conditions are concerns for many. Seniors are less likely to find themselves in the hospital than in the past, in part because prescription drugs are often now routinely used as frontline treatment. The emphasis on current geriatric medicine is not just a longer life, but a longer span of healthy life.

Serving Seniors: A Resource Manual for Missouri Libraries (Mates et al. 2001) summarized some of the sensory changes that affect seniors. Vision is the first sense to be affected by age:

- As the pupil becomes smaller, less light reaches the retina and the field of vision decreases.
- The lens and cornea become less elastic, making it more difficult to shift focus from near to far.
- Eyes may not assimilate violet light, making it more difficult to see blues, greens, and violets.
- The ability to judge distance and depth often decreases, which affects the ability to drive safely.
- Incidents of cataracts also increase.

A nursing home survey completed by the National Center for Health Statistics (1997) found the following:

- Approximately 26 percent of all nursing home residents (420,300 people) had some visual impairment.
- 3 percent had no vision.
- 16 percent were blind but had some vision.
- 6 percent had severe visual impairments but were not legally blind.
- One in six, or 4.9 million, Americans over the age 65 is blind or has a severe visual impairment.

The interview with the Wisconsin Bureau of the Blind indicated that less than 1 percent of the seniors in the United States experiencing age-related vision loss receive vision-related rehabilitation. The population of older people with vision loss is growing faster than available funding and staff to provide rehabilitation services. Medicaid and private health insurers do not provide reimbursement for specialized vision-related rehabilitation services. There is a trend to pay for general rehabilitation services, but the vision rehabilitation then is provided by noncertified people.

Loss of hearing often begins at age 20, with the ability to hear high frequencies decreasing until they cannot be heard at all. Hearing loss makes background noise distracting to many older people and can impact spoken communication.

Seniors also experience changes in the sense of touch and in general dexterity. Knees and elbows may become stiff, and muscles may become weaker. The ability to turn and look in various directions and behind, such as when backing out a car, can be limited. Seniors may not be able to detect changes in temperature or feel vibrations, pressure, or pain. The *Beyond 50.02* study stated that 5 percent of 50 to 64 year olds have limitations on daily activities, and 4 percent of people age 84 and older have limitations (AARP 2002).

People even experience changes in the ability to taste as they age. People begin to lose their sense of taste about age 50. The number of taste buds decreases with age. The abilities to detect “salty” and “sweet” are the most affected, which may cause some older people to oversalt or oversweeten their food. The ability to smell is the one sense that remains most intact. But for people for whom it diminishes, the loss of smell can be dangerous because they cannot smell a gas leak or smoke from a fire.

Results of the Survey of Library Services to Adults with Special Needs

Special Needs Survey Questions on Seniors

Question	Number of Libraries	
	Responding Yes	Percentage
• Library has at least one periodical or newsletter intended for seniors.	244	76%
• Library has added materials in past three years on aging.	206	70%
• Home delivery is available for seniors who live in their own homes.	154	53%
• Home delivery is available to senior apartment units or assisted-living centers.	141	48%
• Library has a brochure that describes special services for seniors.	99	34%
• Library provides deposit collections at nursing homes.	95	32%
• Library provides deposit collections at senior centers.	88	30%
• In the past three years, the library has had a planning process that included seniors, or their family members or agency advocates.	85	29%
• Library Web page has links to information about aging.	56	19%
• Library staff attended training in the past three years on services for seniors.	56	19%

Note: In 2002, 293 of Wisconsin's 380 public libraries completed the survey, a 77 percent response rate. See chapter 12 for the complete survey and a summary of the results.

Barriers to Service

The barrier mentioned most often in the interviews that prevents seniors from using a public library is transportation. It becomes a problem for many seniors as they age because of general changes in overall health, diminishing physical abilities, and factors that affect their ability to drive.

Seniors' ability to use public transportation may be limited if they cannot walk up steps easily, cannot walk very far, stand and wait for any amount of time, or are unsteady on their feet, especially in winter. Vision problems may also affect their ability to walk as well as to read schedules and see names of busses, and so on. Seniors may also feel vulnerable going places by themselves in terms of personal safety. Transportation is an issue for many seniors who need assistance with basic home and personal care in order to remain in their homes. Often, these seniors typically cannot leave their homes without assistance.

Transportation options may be limited for many older seniors who move out of their own homes and into group living situations. Often, when they make this decision, or it is made for them, they do not have personal transportation. The housing options might include senior citizen or low-income housing, assisted-living facilities, group homes, and nursing homes. Transportation is also a special challenge for seniors who live in rural areas in Wisconsin, particularly in winter.

Several professionals who work with seniors mentioned unfamiliarity or discomfort with technology as another barrier to using public libraries. Recent robust retail computer sales to seniors indicates that many seniors are active computer users. But others are not comfortable with computers and may be intimidated by the need to use an on-line computer catalog to locate materials in a library.

Other barriers mentioned in interviews included accessibility issues such as parking, library hours, seniors' physical limitations, and wheelchair access. Language, cultural differences, and lack of experience in using or knowledge about public libraries may discourage older immigrants. Fines and fees may stop others. One director of a Milwaukee center for seniors with low incomes explained, "They don't want to be scolded for returning materials late or for losing items."

Planning and Collaboration

Libraries can benefit from the valuable and long-established connections seniors have with a community. They can take advantage of seniors' life experience by including them on planning committees and advisory boards and by asking them to serve as trustees, staff members, and volunteers. Older adults may be helpful as program resource people. They can often act as liaisons to the community. In the near future, seniors are going to be a powerful voting block and will have considerable political clout locally and at the state level. Libraries will need their support for library political issues.

It may be difficult to get seniors who are frail to come to the library to participate in a formal planning process. Professionals who work with seniors strongly suggest getting input from the following people:

- Nursing home directors
- Nursing home activity directors
- County boards on aging

They also suggest distributing surveys at various locations:

- Senior housing complexes
- Meal sites
- Senior citizen centers

The staff at AARP Wisconsin warned librarians to be sensitive to the differences between various groups within the aging population: "Don't continue to provide services for new seniors the way services were provided to the World War II generation." As for recruiting senior volunteers, "the process needs to be fun, innovative, and involve a learning process."

By being a part of the network that advocates for seniors, public librarians can do a better job planning and designing services that meet the needs of seniors in their communities. Libraries can cosponsor programs with other agencies and provide resources to assist professionals who work with older adults. Invite groups to meet periodically at the library to find out about new materials and services for their clients. In turn, find out how the library can complement and support the activities of these agencies.

Churches, mosques, and synagogues may be willing to put library information in their bulletins or newsletters. Other potential collaborating partners include visiting nurses, Meals on Wheels, day care centers for seniors, and nursing homes. The interviews indicated that it is important for librarians to meet with seniors in places they frequent to keep them abreast of library services. These agencies all typically have newsletters, and most would be receptive to including library information. One senior citizen center director suggested the library provide information on place mats and send them to centers. Seniors tend to read the information on their place mats. In 1999 the American Library Association revised its *Library Services to Older Adults Guidelines*, which may be of use in planning services for seniors with special needs.

Grafton Seniors Discuss Current Events

Since 1989, Lori Ebbert, the interlibrary loan librarian at the U.S.S. Liberty Memorial Public Library in Grafton has led current events discussions at the Grafton senior center. She reads newspapers and news magazines, noting interesting articles, and then brings the materials and her notes with her on her weekly visits to the site. She has a core group of about seven seniors who participate regularly. Others drop in as they come to the building for the meals that are served there. During the hour-long discussion, she brings up timely topics that she thinks will interest the participants and then lets them take over the discussion.

One particularly popular series was devoted to each decade of the twentieth century. Lori brought in library materials that related to the decade, and the seniors also brought in memorabilia to share and discuss. She believes that this discussion program is important because many of the people who attend live alone and have no one with whom to discuss current issues. She finds that they are eager to voice their concerns and opinions about today's local, state, and national issues.

Source: Adapted from the May 2002 Eastern Shores Library System's newsletter, *The Library Connection*.

Accessible Buildings and Services

Incidents of disabilities of all types increase with age, and many seniors do have health concerns, but it is important to eliminate stereotypes that assume all seniors are frail. Many people in a community need accessible libraries, including seniors. The DLTCL's survey of building accessibility and accessible workstations, done in 2000 and 2001, shows that Wisconsin public libraries have to increase their efforts to make their buildings and services accessible. A summary of these studies is included in chapter 6, "Mobility." Easy access should be provided for entrances, bathrooms, and meeting rooms. Attention should also be paid to providing nonslip floor surfaces and to surface textures to avoid causing people who are unsteady on their feet to stumble and fall. Libraries also need to keep sidewalks free of ice in the winter.

The survey revealed that 88 percent of public library buildings in Wisconsin have accessible entrances, but only 38 percent have an electronic door. Electric doors are extremely helpful for seniors. Existing doors can often be retrofitted to open automatically.

Attention should also be given to the selection of furniture, seating, and lighting in a library. Seating should be compatible with older adults' needs and social interests. Chairs that are comfortable enough to encourage seniors to stay for awhile at the library are needed, but arms also make it easier for people to get out of them. Suggestions on assistive technology that may be useful to seniors to address their visual, hearing and physical limitations, are included in chapter 6.

Staff Training

Training and continuing education can help library staff better respond to the needs of seniors. Training can reduce stereotypes, increase staff awareness of cultural and generational differences, provide tips for interacting with seniors, and create awareness of seniors' economic and health challenges.

Seniors over 65 are a highly diverse group. AARP Wisconsin staff noted that there is a significant difference between older and younger seniors. Seniors who were young people during World War II are very different socially from people who matured after the war. The younger seniors tend to be more affluent, better educated, and in better health than older seniors. As a result, the younger seniors are less frail and more active, and may

remain so much longer than older seniors. Younger seniors tend to have higher expectations and are accustomed to being more vocal about those expectations, as well as their needs and wants, than older seniors.

Librarians need to understand the economic realities facing many seniors, especially older seniors. One important issue of concern to seniors is the cost of medical care. The AARP study on senior health security issues reported that the average health care spending per person for people 50 years and older increased twice as fast as the rate of inflation (AARP 2002). The number of seniors who do not have medical insurance has also increased. Fewer employers provide insurance for early retirees, and private insurers cover fewer seniors now than in 1989. When seniors retire and purchase health care insurance from their former employers the rates are often two to four times higher than rates for people age 25. The number of seniors with the lowest incomes who are not insured has increased within a 10-year period. Even more telling, the number of 50- to 64-year-olds with middle and high incomes who are uninsured has also increased. Doctors prescribe drugs more often than ever before, and the cost of prescription drugs places a burden on people who do not have adequate drug coverage. Medicare does not cover the cost of prescription drugs, and seniors with low incomes are frequently forced to make the choice between purchasing their medication, buying food, or paying the rent.

There are serious deficiencies in health care quality. This is especially true for people with low incomes, ethnic and racial minorities, women, and those who are unemployed or retired. These are the same groups most likely to be uninsured. The AARP report found that the elderly population is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity and race.

About 26 percent of out-of-pocket health care spending by Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older who are not living in institutions was for supplemental premium coverage. By 2025, it is projected that elderly Medicare beneficiaries will spend about 30 percent of their income on health care (AARP 2002). A knowledge of the realities of a population living on fixed incomes, with continually increasing medical needs and costs, is important to understanding life concerns of seniors.

Dane County Library Service Has an Outreach Librarian for Seniors

Since 1974 the Dane County Library Service has provided outreach services to seniors who live at home and find it difficult to go to a public library in their own community. This service is offered to all citizens in Dane County, with the exception of Madison, which provides its own services. The outreach librarian, Mary Driscoll, attends monthly meetings of the nursing home and community-based residential facilities activity directors to get ideas and to find out what seniors like. She makes monthly visits to senior nutrition sites to share new materials with the seniors.

The librarian occasionally makes home visits to demonstrate how to use the talking book machines from the Wisconsin Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped or when seniors report their equipment is not operating properly. In addition, the Dane County Library Service coordinates a service that mails large-print books and books on tape directly to seniors' homes. Many of the clients enjoy conversing by phone and call often to make requests. Postage is free under the federal program for mailing materials to people who are blind or who have a physical disability.

Dane County Library Service wrote and received a \$3,000 grant from the Helen Bader Foundation in 2003 to purchase materials for use with people who have Alzheimer's disease. The materials included coffee table books with vivid pictures and music CDs. Dane County provides Bi-Folkal kits and has made up some original kits. One new kit that Dane County created featured Harley Davidson motorcycles to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the company. The outreach librarian does presentations for caregivers and agencies on how to use the kits with groups of seniors and also manages the requests for them. In addition, the Dane County Library Service provides deposit collections of large-print materials at nursing homes, assisted-care facilities, and senior centers.

It is helpful if staff training includes techniques on communicating with seniors. Often, seniors need more time to process information, to express themselves, and to move through routine processes such as completing forms or checking out materials. Seniors often appreciate patience, personal attention, and assistance. Seniors who live alone may want to converse socially as they complete a transaction, simply because their contact with other people is limited.

Libraries should strive to integrate library services to older adults with those offered to other user populations. In addition, some senior advocates suggested having one staff person who has a special interest in seniors be assigned as a general contact person to follow up on special requests or to work with seniors who want or need personalized attention.

Collections and Services

Services to older adults are strongest when they are integrated into the overall efforts of library planning, budgeting, and services. Integration is needed so that senior needs receive appropriate attention and are not set aside to be addressed “when” and “if” money is available. Many of the materials that are especially appropriate for seniors are also of interest and use to other people in the community.

Princeton Seniors Benefit from a Cooperative Project at the Library

Students in Grades 7–12 in Princeton became involved with a service-learning project in the fall of 2002 to benefit seniors. As part of the project, students perform community service at the Princeton Public Library. The library and the school district are cooperating on a project that involves student volunteers teaching basic computer skills to interested seniors at the library. It is anticipated that the students and seniors will learn from each other through this effort. Princeton is one of 18 districts participating in the Wisconsin Youth Connecting Communities Project. This project is administered through the Service Learning Program of the Bright Beginnings Team at the Department of Public Instruction. Funding was provided by Corporation for National and Community Services “Learn and Serve America.”

Libraries can play an important role in providing a community setting for older adults. This is important for several reasons. Visiting a public library is a very “normalizing” experience. AARP Wisconsin staff noted that some “young” seniors do not want anything to do with activities sponsored by senior citizen centers because they associate such activities and centers as benefits for the poor elderly and for the very old and it does not match their perception of who they are. A public library, on the other hand, is a neutral place, and going to a program or class targeted at seniors in a library often may be more comfortable for them. Interviewees suggested programs and classes of special interest to seniors could include book discussion clubs, author talks, health issues, travel, computer and Internet classes, storytelling, and writing classes. The “Additional Resources” section at the end of this chapter includes suggested resources for senior programming ideas.

Public libraries can also offer opportunities for intellectual stimulation and socialization for seniors who live alone. The incident rates of depression and suicide are very high for seniors who feel isolated. Several nursing home staff also noted during the interviews that their residents would like to continue to visit a public library because libraries had long been part of their normal daily lives. There is a mistaken perception by the general public and even families that once someone goes into a nursing home, they do not want or need to leave it.

The interviews suggested that some seniors often appreciate intergenerational programs, where they can interact with and observe children. Because intergenerational programs appeal to all ages, they can be marketed to both young and old. These programs will have a larger audience than those designed just for children or adults.

Most long-term care is provided by family and other unpaid informal caregivers. The AARP report on senior health security (AARP 2002) revealed that more than half of caregivers for seniors provide care for at least five years. Most unpaid senior caregivers are ages 50–64 and have jobs. They make significant economic sacrifices during their peak earning years to provide care. One in five caregivers experiences physical or mental health problems as a result of the stress involved.

Libraries can act as clearinghouses for information and resources on aging issues. Libraries can make it easy to locate electronic and Internet resources on aging by devoting a section of their Web site to the interests of seniors. This information is needed by the seniors themselves, by the families and caregivers, and by the professionals who work with them.

Libraries can be a primary access point to information on retirement planning, health issues, second career opportunities, and other issues. They can keep seniors aware of current programs and events in the community and can actively seek to publicize and promote activities sponsored by other agencies and groups that are of interest to seniors. An area can be set aside to house brochures and flyers of special interest to seniors and their families. Other types of materials frequently suggested by interviewees included large-print books, books on tape, magazines, exercise videos designed for seniors, and Bi-Folkal or other types of programming kits.

Because transportation was identified as a major barrier to public library use, interviewees often suggested bringing library materials and services to seniors. Libraries could provide programs at a number of places:

- Senior citizen centers
- Meal centers
- Housing complexes for seniors
- Nursing homes

One nursing home staff person pointed out that seniors who never were library users are not likely to become users at this point in their lives. However, they may very well enjoy the programs offered by libraries. For seniors who live in special housing, home or on-site delivery of materials is key to helping these taxpayers take advantage of their local public libraries.

Marketing

Lack of awareness about library services and materials was a barrier mentioned in several interviews. Many professionals who have been working with seniors for years were surprised to find out that their local library provided home delivery of library materials. They expressed frustration that libraries did not appropriately market this service and others to the seniors themselves and to agencies that serve seniors. Library staff visits to senior sites and with agency personnel would be effective ways to market library services.

The professionals noted that all of these agencies could use their newsletters to get library information out to seniors and their families. They also suggested sending flyers to the following:

- Local Meals on Wheels program, to be delivered with the meals
- Grocery stores
- Doctors' offices
- Pharmacies
- Churches, mosques, and synagogues, for inclusion in bulletins

If there is an available space, small booths with narrow table tops in a sunny area encourage seniors to sit and socialize while they are at the library. An in-house coffee shop or pot of free coffee adds incentive for them to come and stay for awhile. Comfortable outdoor benches with backs that are placed in shady areas may also encourage seniors to sit and visit with people going in and out of the library. Opportunities for socialization were mentioned frequently in the interviews as a general need for many seniors.

One senior expressed a wish for library design to include large windows or perhaps a sun room with plants, where seniors who cannot afford to go south for the winter could come and just relax in the sunshine. Many Wisconsin seniors cannot afford to travel or add these sun rooms to their own homes and would appreciate a sun-filled place they could go to read and absorb the sunlight for part of the day.

References: Aging

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Additional Resources

Periodicals

- MM* (formerly *Modern Maturity*). <www.modernmaturity.org>. *MM* is a bimonthly publication with entertainment and service-oriented content for AARP members over 55, with coverage of health, personal finance, work and life transitions, and personal-enrichment issues.
- My Generation*. <www.mygeneration.org>. An AARP publication aimed at people who are just reaching 55. It covers issues related to work, money, health, food, travel, and music.
- Segunda Juventud* (Second Youth). <www.aarp.org/espanol>. A new AARP publication providing news and information of particular interest to the senior Hispanic community.

National Organizations

- AARP. <www.aarp.org>; 800-424-3410 or 202-434-2277; 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20049. Addresses the needs and interests of persons 50 and older through information and education, advocacy, and service.

Administration on Aging. <www.aoa.gov/aoa/pages/welcome.html>; 800-677-1116; 330 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20201. Information for older Americans and their families, including “Eldercare Locator” to find services for an older person in local communities.

American Society on Aging. <www.asaging.org>; 415-974-9600; 833 Market Street, Suite 511, San Francisco, CA 94103-1824. A nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the knowledge and skills of those working with older adults and their families.

Eldergames/USHC. <www.unitedseniorshealth.org/html/pubs_eldergames.html>. 202-479-6973; 409 Third Street SW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20024-3212. Games designed to stimulate the minds and memories of older adults through creative reminiscing.

Federal Administration on Aging. <www.aoa.dhhs.gov>; 202-619-0724; 202-401-7575 (TTY); Administration on Aging, 330 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20201. This site has numerous links to national services and Web sites for seniors.

Federal Social Security Administration. <www.ssa.gov>; 800-772-1213; 800-325-0778 (TTY). There are various offices in each state with consumer information about Social Security benefits.

National Alzheimer’s Association. <www.alz.org>; 800-272-3900 or 312-335-8700; 919 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60611-1676. The largest health organization committed to finding a cure for Alzheimer’s and helping those affected by the disease.

National Asian-Pacific Center on Aging. <www.napca.org/prod01.htm>. Committed to the dignity, well-being, and quality of life of Asian Pacific Americans in their senior years.

National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Inc. <www.ncba-aged.org>; 202-637-8400; 1220 L Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005. Improves the quality of life for African American seniors.

National Council on Aging. <www.ncoa.org>; 202-479-1200; 409 Third Street SW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20024. Works to promote the dignity, self-determination, and well-being of older persons, primarily with community organizations and professionals.

National Family Caregivers Association. <www.nfcares.org/home.html>; 800-896-3650; 10400 Connecticut Avenue, #500, Kensington, MD 20895-3944. A grass-roots organization created to educate, support, and empower Americans who care for chronically ill, aged, or disabled loved ones.

National Indian Council on Aging. <www.nicoa.org>; 505-292-2001; 10501 Montgomery Boulevard NE, Suite 210, Albuquerque, NM 87111-3846. Serves as the advocate for the nation’s Native American and Alaska Native elders.

National Parkinson Foundation. <www.parkinson.org>; 800-327-4545 or 305-547-6666; Bob Hope Parkinson Research Center, 1501 NW Ninth Avenue, Bob Hope Road, Miami, FL 33136-1494. Working to find the cause and cure for Parkinson’s disease and related neurodegenerative disorders through research.

SeniorNet. <www.seniornet.org/php/>; 415-495-4990; 121 Second Street, 7th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105. An organization of computer-using adults, age 50 and older, that provides older adults education for and access to computer technologies.

Wisconsin Organizations

AARP Wisconsin. <www.aarp.org/statepages/wi.html>; 608-251-2277; 608-286-6333 (TTY); 3 S. Pinckney Street, Suite 801, Madison, WI 53703. Provides members with information, a broad menu of services, consumer and legislative advocacy, and opportunities for community involvement.

AgeNet. <www.agenet.com>; 608-256-0488, ext. 30; 17 Applegate Court, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53713. A comprehensive eldercare network to meet the specific needs of the aging population and their adult caregiving children.

Bi-Folkal Productions, Inc. <www.bifolkal.com>; 800-568-5357; 809 Williamson Street, Madison, WI 53703. A nonprofit corporation in Madison that packages ideas and resources in kits for reminiscence programs with older adults.

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups. <www.cwag.org/Home%20Page.htm>; 608-224-0606; 2850 Dairy Drive Suite 100, Madison, WI 53718-6751. Concerned with the issues affecting older persons and their families. One of the services is the Elder Law Center, which devotes resources to research and public education through talks, training, newsletter articles, and legislative advocacy.

The Milwaukee County Department on Aging. <milwaukeecounty.com>; 235 W. Galena Street, Suite 180, Milwaukee, WI 53212. This office is also the local Area Agency on Aging. Federal funds provide choices for living in the community.

Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A). <www.execpc.com/~aging/w4a.htm>. The staff and board are members of the six Area Agencies on Aging. W4A takes a leadership role to strengthen the collaboration of the aging network in Wisconsin to better serve older people.

Age AdvantAge, Inc. <www.discover-net.net/~ageadvan/>; 608-224-6300; 2850 Dairy Drive, Suite 200, Madison, WI 53718. Counties and tribes served: Buffalo, Chippewa, Columbia, Crawford, Dodge, Dunn, Eau Claire, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, La Crosse, Lafayette, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Richland, Rock, St. Croix, Sauk, Trempealeau, Vernon, Ho-Chunk Nation.

Bay Area Agency on Aging, Inc. <www.agingassist.com>; 800-991-5578 or 920-469-8858; 1850 Elkay Lane, Green Bay, WI 54302. Counties and tribes served: Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Marquette, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Waushara, Winnebago, Menominee Tribe, Oneida Tribe, Stockbridge-Munsee Tribes.

Dane County Area Agency on Aging. <www.co.dane.wi.us/aging/>; 608-224-3663; 1955 W. Broadway, Suite 105, Madison, WI 53713. County served: Dane.

Milwaukee Area Agency on Aging. <www.milwaukeecounty.com/index.html>; 414-289-5950; Brewery Square, 235 W. Galena Street, Suite 180, Milwaukee, WI 53212-3925. County served: Milwaukee.

Northern Area Agency on Aging. <naaa.bfm.org>; 715-365-2525; 1835 N. Stevens, P.O. Box 1028, Rhinelander, WI 54501. Counties and tribes served: Douglas, Vilas, Lac du Flambeau, Portage, Marathon, Wood, Clark, Lincoln, Langlade, Iron, Sawyer, Lac Courte Oreilles, Adams, Ashland, Bad River, Florence, Forest, Sokaogon-Chippewa, Forest County Potawatomi, Price, Oneida, Barron, Burnett, Rusk, Polk, Washburn, St. Croix Tribe, Bayfield, Red Cliff, Taylor.

Satellite Office for Northern Area Agency on Aging and Age Advantage. 715-836-4105; 2427 N. Hillcrest Parkway, Suite 205, Altoona, WI 54720. Counties and tribes served: Barron, Buffalo, Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Crawford, Dunn, Eau Claire, Ho Chunk Nation, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, Rusk, St. Croix Tribe, Trempealeau, Vernon, and Washburn.

Southeastern Area Agency on Aging, Inc. <www.execpc.com/~aging/>; 262-821-4444; 125 Executive Drive, Suite 102, Brookfield, WI 53005. Counties served: Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha.

Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care. <longtermcare.state.wi.us/static/>; 214 N. Hamilton Street, Madison, WI 53703. An advocate for long-term care consumers and assists residents in group homes and recipients of the Community Options Program (COP), in addition to nursing home residents.

Medigap Helpline. 800-242-1060. The helpline provides insurance counseling and offers expertise in every type of insurance product that might be marketed to Medicare beneficiaries.

Ombudsman Program. 800-815-0015; The Ombudsman program augments the efforts of regional staff.

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us>; 608-266-1865; 608-267-7371 (TTY); 1 W. Wilson Street, Madison, WI 53702. This agency administers numerous programs in Wisconsin for seniors.

Aging Resources Page. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/index.htm>.

Alzheimer's Family and Caregiver Support Program. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/Genage/alzfcgsp.htm>.

Benefit Specialist Program. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/Genage/benspecs.htm>.

Choosing a Nursing Home. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/bqaconsumer/NursingHomes/NHchoose.htm>.

County or Tribal Aging Offices. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/contacts/coagof.htm>.

Elder Abuse in Wisconsin. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/elderabuse/index.htm>.

Elderly Nutrition. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/Nutrition_program/eldernutrition.htm>.

Elderly Transportation. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Aging/Genage/TRANSErv.htm>.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/BOALTC/ltcombud.htm>.

The Medigap Helpline. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/BOALTC/medigap.htm>.

Physical Limitations among Older Adults Living in the Community <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/stats/95fhs.htm>.

Programs for Older People and Their Families. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/Genage/proserv.htm>.

Regional Area Agencies on Aging. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/contacts/regaaas.htm>.

Senior Employment Services. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/Genage/sencsep.htm>.

Volunteer Opportunities for Older Adults. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/voluntr/voloppsr.htm>.

Wisconsin Administration on Aging. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Aging/INDEX.htm>.

Wisconsin Dementia Services Database. <wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/dementia/>.

Wisconsin Medicaid Spousal Impoverishment. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/medicaid3/recpubs/factsheets/spousimp.pdf>.

Wisconsin Partnership for the Frail Elderly. <www.dhfs.state.wi.us/WIpartnership>.

All Web sites listed here were last accessed in November 2002.

Getting Started with Little Money and Time: Aging

The following are some ideas for public libraries to use when designing services for seniors.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

- Greet every senior who comes into the library with a smile. Tell them to let you know if they need help. If you see them struggling to reach a shelf or if they seem to be searching for something, do not wait for them to ask; offer assistance.

PLANNING AND COLLABORATION

- Request free brochures on topics of interest to seniors from your immediate community or the county board on aging, health departments, and AARP. Find a place to display these brochures and put up a sign that indicates that the materials are of special interest to seniors. One good place to put them is in a holder near the large-print books.
- Call the local nursing home directors in your community, the coordinator of the Meals on Wheels program, or directors of senior citizen centers or hospice providers and make an introduction. Ask if they would be willing to put information about library services in their newsletters or include it in the packet of information they give their clients. Follow up with regular articles about new materials or programs that seniors might enjoy.
- Invite any organization that provides transportation for seniors to make the library a destination for one of their outings.
- Develop a short survey for seniors. Print the surveys in large print. Distribute them at senior centers, housing units, or meal sites and in the library to find out what the library is doing well and what changes seniors feel should be made.

ACCESSIBLE BUILDINGS AND SERVICES

- Slow down when interacting with seniors. Don't rush transactions and conversations. Seniors may need more time than other patrons to understand what is being said, to organize their thoughts, and to gather their belongings together. If other patrons are not waiting, instigate social conversation and be a good listener. The librarian may be the only human being the senior will talk to on a given day because some seniors have less social contacts than many other people in a community.

MARKETING

- Create a service brochure for seniors. Use a readable font, using 14 point size at a minimum, and make up a few copies to have on hand for seniors and others who may have vision problems. Or enlarge paper versions on a copier.
- Plan to set up a display honoring seniors and on positive aging to celebrate Older Americans Month (www.aoa.gov) or National Senior Health and Fitness Day (www.fitnessday.com/senior/index.htm) both in May, Healthy Aging Month (www.healthyaging.net) in September, and National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month (www.alz.org) in November. Put up a display with materials of interest to seniors, their families, caregivers, and professionals who work with them.

All Web pages listed here were accessed in November 2002.

